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hood of their prophecy. More significant still, when he found that his doom was certain, he issued a last religious edict in the vain hope of appeasing the resentment of the Christians and their God. The document is worth giving in full:

" The Emperor Caisar Cains Valerius Maximinus, Ger-manicus, Sarmatieus, pious, happy, invincible, august.

" We have always endeavoured by all means in. our power to secure the advantage of those who dwell in our provinces, and to contribute by our benefits at once to the prosperity of the State and to the well-being of every citizen. Nobody can be ignorant of this, and we are confident that each one who puts his memory to the test, is persuaded of its truth.

" We found, however, some time ago that, in virtue of the edict published by our divine parents, Diocletian and Maximian, ordering the destruction of the places where the Christians were in the habit of assembling, many excesses and acts of violence had been committed by our public servants and that the evil was 1 icing increasingly felt by our subjects every day, inasmuch as their goods were, under this pretext, unwarrantably Rei/.ed.

"Consequently, we declared last year by letters addressed to the Governors of the Provinces that if any one wished to attach himself to this sect and practise this religion, he should l>c allowed to please himself without interference and no one should say him nay, and the Christians should enjoy complete liberty and be sheltered from all fear and all suspicion.

" However, we have not been able entirely to shut our eyes to the fact that certain of the magistrates misunderstood our instructions, with the result that our subjects distrusted our worda and were nervous about resuming